

Visual Culture of India and its Impact on Indian Advertising: A Perspective from Colonial India

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to observe the development of visual vocabulary in India and focus on its effect on Indian Advertising during stages of colonial rule in India. India is well-known for its cultural and traditional enthusiasm subjecting to the conventional styles of art, food, living fashion, and religious cultures. Indians have a wide range of cultural and traditional identities, which are presented through diverse sorts of art forms native to different terrains. The variety in lifestyle attracts many people across the globe towards India. Ordinary Indian lifestyle was simple and naive because India was ruled by numerous kings for quite a long time. Colonial Indians positioned a huge impact on the art, traditions, and lifestyle that persist till date in India. Hence, art in India is inspired by many diverse artists in regards to the subject of narration and the style of medium handling. Advertising has always reflected the socio-religious situations and artistic trends in a society. This paper will bring a deeper consciousness to the early phase of marketing in India through various examples that might reflect on the existing Advertising world.

Keywords: Advertising; Colonial; Design; Tradition; Visual Culture.

Introduction

India has unique lifestyles and its subcultures are famous everywhere around the globe and across all the crossways of the country. The visuals in society have an undeniable impact on Indian lives. Geographically, India is divided into four essential components namely, north, south, west & east; with a vast variety in characteristics such as mountains, desolate tracks, and plateaus of the country. The distinctive cultural loops of each

state have carved out unique shapes and patterns (cultural and traditional) within every state. Indians have preserved their historical past and tradition in many approaches like music, architecture, dance, languages, festivities, customs, delicacies, and traditional beliefs inside the country. Various religions have blessed India with a very diverse lifestyle, the vibration of which creates mystic surroundings and leaves travelers spellbound when they come to India. The adventure in the call of our country reflects in the subculture of India. India (Bharat) is the union of states and a fusion of numerous religions, cultures, customs, heritage, etc. This makes it a thrilling nation embracing the diversities of these people. Since historic instances, our state has been termed as 'Bharat'. The term 'Bharat' is derived from the Sanskrit, defined as 'Bharatvarsa' in our Hindu Puranas and the Mahabharata. As an ecological body from the Himalayas on the northern face and the oceans on the south part, the Puranas describe, now politically divided into different smaller groups, but listed together. The name of the Indian in the Persian time is known as 'Hindustan.' It was generally used to refer to the seventeenth century within the English language, and eventually became the English guide to this area.¹ Colonial India passing through the various kings, dynasties, and rules has created works in diverse cultures, living styles reflecting the development of the architecture of India. Some of the magnificent architectures famous for their handicraft, material, and monumental size have been representing India to the world. Advertising uses various pictures and symbols as visuals to present ideas from the Indian culture.

Development of Advertising Agencies in India

Word Advertising is derived from the Latin word 'advert' which means 'to turn to'. Advertising tends to turn one's mind or focus on something that is the advertising message, which is the advertising intent and the advertiser's aim (to accomplish its target of selling a commodity or an idea). In India, the oldest types of 'advertisement' can be traced to be several centuries old. In early India, 'Buddhists' maybe, appreciated the value of 'visual communication' in spreading religion. The aim was to pass the beliefs and practices of Buddha and his morals to the people. Asoka set up rocks and pillar-edicts all over the country to preach the teachings of Gautam Buddha. On some of these impressive rocks, are the 'commandments' of the religion. Reflecting through this example, in India, many factors affect Advertising. Factors such as (a) Printing press: At the Initial level in 1556 printing press was set up by the Portuguese for the production of Christian literature. (b) Newspaper: The earliest Newspaper was happening in Calcutta in 1780. Then soon after there were 4 weekly and

monthly newspapers and magazines available in Calcutta, and The Bengal Journal carried Government advertisements without charge. In Bombay, during 1790 the newspaper 'The Courier' was published which has been carrying advertisements in various vernacular languages like Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, and Urdu. The original newspaper was produced in 1833 in an Indian vernacular language. (c) Advertising Agencies: At the primary level, an Advertising agency was started in 1907 at Bombay, and the further was commencing in 1909. The initial fully developed Indian Advertising agency was launched and rapidly several others came up, bringing along struggles to raise staff among all the existing agencies, foremost of which was a deep demand on high valued skills of (1) Copy (2) layout (3) Printing on the division of foreign advertisers. The growth and improvement came in many ways in the advertising agencies like designing and art incorporation, block production, and printing. Overseas agencies hired Indian staff, and quite a number had been sent abroad for training in the different facets of advertisement and related work.²

The Early Phase of Art Schools in India

Indian colonial art practices have passed through numerous stages which has given new dimensions to the early level of advertising, especially the shift from craftsmanship to business art. There are numerous mechanics institute and artwork schools had been established within the Indian sub-continent through the colonial administration, which at the side of the agenda of improving artisanship and education in "high-quality art", eventually introduced full-fledged guides in "commercial artwork". Here students had been trained in lithography, photography, graphic layout, coloration separation, and preferred printing press work as well as excelled in designing posters, commercials, and book illustrations. Indian philosophy of art and art education has a unique tradition with a comprehensive description. Various art schools have been developed in various parts of India, including Madras (Chennai), Calcutta (Kolkata), and Bombay (Mumbai). "The Government College of Art & Craft" in Kolkata was established as the School of Industrial Art on 16th August 1854, in 'Garanhata, Chitpur'. In Bombay "Sir J. J. School of Art" was stated on 2nd March 1857. The "Elphinstone Institute" school began with elementary drawing and design lessons.³

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To improve the aesthetics of machine-made goods, and combine beauty with functionality in products, packaging, and advertising. To remind In-

dia that printing is a craft, indoors decorating an art, and industrial layout a noticeably skilled profession, all the bales of mill yarn fabric getting into India from Great Britain had been trademarked and labeled. Usually, these labels were square in the form most of the time and labeled on all four sides with ornate margins, with the primary picture in the middle depicting scenes of Hindu mythology, depictions of god or goddess or part of the British royal family; or jugglers and belly dancers, nautch girls, artisans, and renderers of providers. Besides Indian images, various labels with images of Europeans in titillating postures have also been a part of the packaging of British textile goods. Numerous layers of packaging are used in the trade of products like Soap, Tea, cigarettes, and raw material for the finished products.

Indian Tea Brand Advertisements

India has a historical past on brands of Tea and various print ads mirror the Indian tradition via dressing, decoration and the indoor composition style. "Most of the classified ads constitute tea drinking as an attractive activity comfortable within the advertisement. India is pressured for its flavor of tea and coffee in regards to the diligent care of its former colonial overlords. Tea, especially the Darjeeling kind, was added in plantations in North East India in the 1830s because the British sought to destabilize the Chinese monopoly over the product, writes Philip Ludendorff in an essay that accompanies Paul's series of images of tea. Tea plantations in India were meant to provide tea for overseas consumers. When tea consumption in Britain and the US started to stagnate around the flip of the 20th century, the British, ever the opportunists, determined to look to India to increase their markets. The Tea Board's early ads needed to include commands on how to make the product. The board also disbursed small packets of tea, to be had for one paisa, in villages, and to middle-class consumers. The tea shops that exist at railway stations and docks nowadays are manufactured from the Tea Board's campaign, in line with Vernon Wickizer in a book on the political financial system of tea, espresso, and colas. After Independence, Indian businesses started to represent tea ascent percentage of Swadeshi products."⁴



(Image 1)



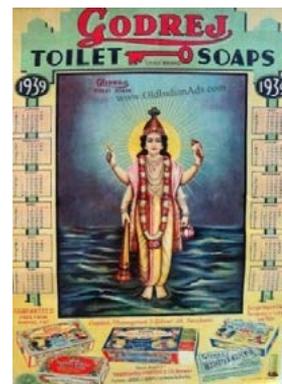
(Image 2)

Soap Advertisements

Lever brother, daylight, and Vinolia Soap were a household name throughout India as a well-known brand of the time. They used various promotional materials like a multi-color single side printed calendar with the Hindu holy images, along with Vishnu of Raja Ravi Varma royally using his Garuda car flanking his two consorts. The picture of the 'Sun god Surya flanked by women chauri (Flywhisk) bearers' in Lever's 1933 calendar, pulling his chariot dragged by 7 homes pushed by Arun, the charioteer-a significant iconography. A 1938 sunshine calendar Soap confirmed a 'four' arm 'Sarasvati' status in a lotus pond and the Vina gambling, the drape of her sari mutating her into a proto - Bharat Mata, Mother India. 'Woodward's Gripe Water' Calendar used babe Krishna photographs almost constantly. This situated the company nicely.⁵



(Image 3)



(Image 4)

Cigarette Avertisements

The famous visuals on selling cigarette packets often represented the working-class social behavior and aspiration of city Indians. Cigarette smoking began to display feminine characteristics as an example personal and economic freedom, self-assurance, entry into male-dominated industries, style, and so on, or “Slims” cigarettes were made specifically for women. A big-city lady in a saree holds a cigarette in one hand and a can of ‘Best Virginia Bombay Special’ in the other, according to an illustration from the Bombay Special Cigarettes calendar from the 1930s. The 1912 calendar published by the City Tobacco Company in Bangalore for the “Maharaja Cigars” symbol is one of the oldest remaining graded cigarette advertisements in India. The Maharaja of Mysore wrapped these single-sheet calendar capacities in full royalty insignias, significantly displaying the symbol and ensuring the greatest of its stuffing proper to the top and shoulder of the Maharaja: natural Indian tobacco and high-quality rice paper. Overdosing on Orientalism, Western producers used imagery of “Indian ethnic classes” on the cigarette packages, as well as in Indian colonial cigarette advertising and publicity promotions. “Several cigarettes businesses commenced supplying miniature photo playing cards as oriental beauties, Indian occupations (sweeper, water carrier, soldier, etc.), nautch girls, movie stars and white ladies in seductive poses,” according to Jain “These cards had seemingly been issued in India among the 1890s and 1920s by using Tiger Cigarettes and Pedro Cigarettes, both brands of the British-American Tobacco Company Ltd. Around the same time, Universal Tobacco Company, Madras, and Scissors Cigarette of W.D. & H.O. Wills supplied similar photograph cards in their cigarette packets.”. Processer such as ‘Peninsular Tobacco Co. Ltd’ on the cards of a well-known symbol such as ‘Hawagarri Cigarette’, often used pictures of Hindu deities and mythological scenes.⁶



(Image 5)

Matchbox Design

The earliest labels in India did no longer cater to neighborhood tastes. Oftentimes the labels were in a foreign language and pictures blanketed unfamiliar topics, but as the opposition among sellers grew, so did the inclusion of images and topics more applicable to India. Mythology, religion, artwork, and architecture had been an obvious choice. Several of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings and oleographs and those of his contemporaries have been produced for use on matchboxes. The Ravi Varma Press at Lonavala near Bombay even printed labels for the Deccan Match Manufacturing Company. National Symbols: During the partition of Bengal, and after 1905, many labels protected the word "swadeshi" in English, in addition to Hindi, Bengal, and other Indian Languages. The labels and problem related also underline the guide for swadeshi or indigenous production. From 1947, there was a profusion of photographs together with maps, the flag, the lion, Capital, Ashoka Chakra, and other symbols associated with impartial India. Royal Portraits: Gauhar Jan, India's first recorded performing artist changed into a portrait on a matchbox by solo Match works of Australia in 1903 and the image grew to be an instantaneous success. Advertising on matchbox Labels: Matchboxes were extensively utilized to sell cigar and cigarette brands. ⁷



(Image 6)



(Image 7)

Conclusion

India is a huge market for national and worldwide brands. At the same time, Indian tradition performs a vital aspect in advertising and marketing to communicate a message. The colonial instances to sell the product likes Soap, Cigarette, Matchbox, and label at the bales of mill yarn and cloth support this statement. The graphics used for conversation are more

closely linked to Indian mythology, India's history, goddess/god images, British royal family images, Indian craftsmen and rituals by dressing and ornament, and even so today, in India's technological era. Mainly the visual began to flaunt the growth of the feminist's suggests such as monetary independence and self-confidence in the male domination in society. Several facets of traditions, beauty, vogue, and the resulting community of pupils, and gender distinction are symbolized in the visuals. In the fresh times, a familiar lifestyle of the nationalist wave, lifestyle modernization and the growth of the company are the relevant subjects. This visual subculture is a brand new possibility for society and the market to talk about this message.

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